

Facts on Kids and Secondhand Smoke

You certainly know that smoking is dangerous to your health, and for one reason or another have not chosen to quit, or have tried and failed. Do you also know that if you smoke at home or in the car, the smoke you exhale can cause serious health problems for your children?

- Secondhand smoke, also called *environmental tobacco smoke*, hangs in the air for hours and days. The smoke particles are too small to see, but even if the air seems perfectly clear, it isn't. Even if you only smoke in one room, the smoke particles quickly filter all throughout the house.
- Cigarette smoke contains more than 400 chemicals. Many of these chemicals irritate the nose, sinuses, middle ear, and lungs. Many cause cancer in smokers. This is what your child and anyone else coming into your home breathes in.
- Secondhand smoke greatly increases the risk that your child will develop asthma. If he has asthma, it increases the risk that he will have to go to the emergency room or be hospitalized.
- Secondhand smoke also increases the risk of infections anywhere from your child's nose down to his lungs: sinus infections, ear infections (including "glue ear"), pneumonia, and bronchitis. The likelihood of needing surgery to have tubes put in the ears goes way up.
- There may be an increased risk of cancer, including leukemia, in children exposed to secondhand smoke.